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Dates of Elliott's Sketch

BY JOHN HENDLEY BARNHART

In 1816 Stephen Elliott began the publication of "A Sketch of the Botany of South Carolina and Georgia," now recognized as a classic among works relating to North American botany. It appeared in parts, the title-pages of the two volumes bearing only the dates of their completion, 1821 and 1824 respectively. In deciding questions of priority, it is highly important to know the exact date of publication of every botanical work in which new names are used, and it is my intention in this contribution to collate the known facts and the probabilities relating to the actual dates of the different portions of Elliott's Sketch.

Many references to this subject are to be found in recent literature, but without exception these seem to be based upon two brief notices by Asa Gray, which appeared in January and May, 1877, in the American Journal of Science and Arts, of which Gray was at that time the botanical editor. As the first of these contains several inaccuracies, and the second, if carefully compared with the first, corrects some of these; and as the second note has evidently been overlooked by some persons who have noticed the first, it may be well here to reprint them both in full.

The first note (Am. Journ. Sci. III. 13: 81. Ja. 1877) is as follows:

"*Date of Publication of Elliott's Botany of South Carolina and Georgia.*—The title-page of the first volume bears the date of 1821. But it is well known that the work was issued in parts, and that the publication began much earlier. The actual time of issue becomes important in respect to the priority of certain generic and specific names, notably those in Nuttall's *Genera*, published in 1818. Contrary to the testimony of the title-pages, it is generally understood that Elliott's names of *Podostigma* and *Acerates* have priority over Nuttall's *Stylandra* and *Anantherix*. To avoid future trouble it is desirable to put upon record such evidence upon the point as is now obtainable. The only printed testimony yet met with is in the *Reliquiae Baldwinianae*, the correspondence of Dr. Wm. Baldwin (Elliott's ablest collaborator), lovingly edited

by his friend, Dr. Darlington. By reference to pp. 202, 248, 249, and 585, it is made out that the first number of Elliott's work was issued as early as October, 1816, was recalled, reprinted, and issued anew, along with the second number, before January, 1817. The first number probably ended on p. 96; the second on p. 222. The third and fourth numbers were published before November 10, 1817. The fourth number must have included p. 466: the fifth and concluding number of the volume (to which the title-page assigns the date of 1821) must begin on or before p. 529. For, on the latter page Nuttall's genus *Diamorpha* occurs, and his work is for the first time cited, while the prefatory list of decandrous genera, on p. 466, does not contain *Diamorpha*.

"This is confirmed by Elliott's correspondence with Zaccheus Collins, now in the possession of the Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, which Mr. Redfield has kindly consulted at my request; from which it appears, in short, that No. 1 was first issued, September 26, 1816; No. 2, on or before February 19, 1817; No. 3, on or before April 3, 1817; No. 4 and No. 5, no data found; No. 6, the commencement of the second volume, appeared on or before October 12, 1821. The title-page of this volume bears the date of 1824."

The unfortunate assumption, reiterated in the foregoing note that No. 5 completed the first volume and No. 6 commenced the second one, vitiates much of Gray's argument. The error is corrected, but no particular attention is called to its importance as affecting the main line of argument in the further note (Am. Journ. Sci. III. 13: 392. My. 1877):

"*Date of the Parts of Elliott's Botany.*—Referring to our note in the January No. of this Journal, it is worth recording that the first fasciculus actually ended, as was supposed, on p. 96. No. 5 consisted of pages 401–496, and bears the date of 1817. No. 6 contained pages 497–606, and is dated 1821. This information is obtained from the inspection of copies of those parts in their original state, and is obligingly supplied by Mr. F. B. Dexter, of the Yale College Library."

It will be seen that the most accurate evidence given in these two notes relates to No. 1. It consisted of pp. 1–96, was originally issued Sept. 26, 1816, was recalled, reprinted and reissued with No. 2, but Gray makes no reference to the cause of this reprinting. In an "advertisement," published, I believe, with No. 4, Elliott states a reason for this procedure. He says: "THE first and nearly half of the second Number of this sketch had been

printed before I could obtain a copy of Pursh's *Flora Americae Septentrionalis*. This work, published in London under the most favorable auspices, has enabled me to add to my own researches, and those of the friends who have aided me, all that has been collected in this country by the travellers and botanists of Europe. Willing to avail myself of the advantages it afforded me, and to present to my readers as comprehensive a view of our Botany as possible ; desirous also not to add to the confusion of synonymes, which is becoming a serious evil in American botany, and to correct a few inaccuracies which had been pointed out to me, I immediately reprinted the first number of my work. In the second number, the alterations were too unimportant to render this measure necessary."

One cause which doubtless strongly influenced Elliott to reprint his first number, but is referred to merely incidentally in the foregoing paragraph, is brought out strongly in certain manuscript evidence to which I have had access. Darlington, in the *Reliquiae Baldwinianae*, did not publish all of Baldwin's letters which have been preserved. Baldwin was evidently in the habit of writing his letters serially in a note-book, and then copying each from the book, and a number of these note-books (including, it would appear, a portion of those published in *Reliquiae Baldwinianae*) afterward came into the possession of John Torrey, and are now at the New York Botanical Garden, where I have had the privilege of consulting them, through the kindness of the librarian, Miss Vail.

Among these books is one containing all of Baldwin's letters to Elliott, from August 31, 1815, until his death ; and of course this correspondence teems with references to the "Sketch," in which Baldwin was almost as much interested as Elliott himself. Under date of October 7, 1816, he writes, from Savannah : "I have looked over your number one, and am completely satisfied that it is by far the best effort that has been made to redeem the Botanical honor of our Country." With this introduction, he proceeds to criticise the work rather harshly, complaining especially that Elliott has credited to him certain names which he never was responsible for, and imperfect descriptions which he did not intend for publication, and which he wished, after perfecting them, to

publish himself. Undoubtedly these complaints had their influence in inducing Elliott to recall and reprint his first number. On November 11, 1816, Baldwin writes: "I had this day the pleasure to receive your valuable letter of the 8th. No measure could possibly be adopted more to my satisfaction than that of re-printing your first number. Every thing can now be adjusted to our mutual satisfaction."

Elliott seems to have been remarkably successful in recalling and destroying the original edition of the first number of his "Sketch." No copy is now known to exist, and if any should be discovered it would be of the utmost importance that fac-similes of it should be prepared and distributed, for there is no question whatever that it was properly published in every sense of the word, and if its contents were known it would necessitate the alteration of several names of southern species.

I have often wondered to what extent the first edition differed from the second, which forms pages 1-96 of all known copies, but had never found a line bearing upon the subject until I discovered these letters of Baldwin to Elliott. Baldwin's letters of October 7th and 13th, and November 11th, mention specifically certain features of the original edition which were altered in the reprint, and it seems worth while to place these on record, although I would not advocate taking up the older names as long as no copy of the original edition is known to exist, and we are unable to cite the page with certainty. In the following list, the citations are from the known edition, the differences in the first edition being noted.

P. 36. *Collinsonia verticillata* Baldw. This was not in edition 1; it was first described in Baldwin's letter of November 11.

P. 39. *Erianthus strictus* Baldw. This was described by Baldwin in his letter of November 11, but it is not clear whether the species was not mentioned in the original edition, or Baldwin was dissatisfied with the description as it there appeared.

P. 53. *Xyris juncea* Baldw. This appeared as "*Xyris setifolia* Baldw." originally, but Baldwin indignantly disclaimed responsibility for this name, so Elliott changed it.

P. 90. *Dichromena latifolia* Baldw. This was *Dichromena involucrata* in the first place, but in his letter of October 13, Bald-

win called Elliott's attention to the fact that he had named it *D. latifolia* in previous letters, so this name was adopted in the new issue.

So much for the first number. The date of the second number cannot be decided quite as accurately, but we are safe in saying that it was within a very few days of January 1, 1817, and probably before that date. I have seen no original copy of its cover, but there is no doubt that it bore the date 1816. De Candolle (Syst. 2: 703. 1821), doubtless writing with the first four parts before him in their original covers, says: "ELLIOT (Steph.). A Sketch of the Botany of South-Carolina and Georgia. In-8. Charlestown Fasc. 1, II, 1816, III, IV, 1817." Gray, in the note quoted at the beginning of this paper, says "before January, 1817," and I believe he is correct. Alterations suggested in Baldwin's letter of Nov. 11 were made use of in the correction of No. 1, the reissue of which occurred with No. 2, so they could not easily have appeared before December. Baldwin, writing to Darlington during the first half of February, 1817 (Reliq. Baldw. 202), says that he has not yet received them, "although noticed in Charleston several weeks ago;" showing that they must have appeared as early as January, 1817; and it seems altogether probable that they were published in the latter part of December, 1816. At all events, they were almost certainly dated 1816, and in such cases the burden of proof always rests with those who would claim that the date as printed is incorrect.

It may be as well here as anywhere to speak of the pagination of the different parts, for here Gray was far astray in his guesses. In his first note he proves (to his own satisfaction) that No. 4 included p. 466; while his second note shows clearly that No. 5 began with p. 401; but he calls no attention to the discrepancy, nor does he offer any new suggestions. As a matter of fact, each number consisted of as nearly one hundred pages as was possible without breaking a signature. Each signature consisted of eight pages, so that one hundred pages would make twelve and a half signatures. To avoid this, the first part consisted of twelve signatures (96 pages), the second of thirteen (104 pages), the third of twelve, and so on, to the last of volume one. The evidence I have to offer upon this point is incontrovertible. We have seen

already that the first part ended with p. 96. Barton (Comp. Fl. Phila., 82), cites p. 197, and as he cites no later pages, it is evident that he had at the time only the first two parts. At the meeting of the Lyceum of Natural History of New York, May 19, 1817 (Am. Mo. Mag. 1: 127. Je. 1817), Dr. Mitchill "offered the sketch of the botany of South-Carolina and Georgia, by Stephen Elliot, Esq., as far as the same was published. Great satisfaction was expressed on finding this elaborate and classical work had proceeded almost as far as the second order of the fifth class," *i. e.*, almost as far as page 314, which shows that Dr. Mitchill presented Nos. 1-3 at this time. In June, 1818, Rafinesque (Am. Mo. Mag. 3: 96) reviews the Sketch, "5 Numbers, 8vo., each of 100 pages."

If any further evidence were needed, I have in my possession a copy of pp. 1-400, bound from the original parts. The original covers, except the first, are missing, but the demarcation of the parts is easily discernible.

The third number was doubtless published in March, 1817. Gray says, "on or before April 3, 1817," and I have mentioned the fact that a copy was presented to the New York Lyceum on May 19.

The fourth number was nearly ready for distribution before the end of August. Baldwin (Reliq. Baldw. 242), says that Elliott corrected the last proof-sheet August 21, but owing to an epidemic in Charleston (Reliq. Baldw. 193) it does not seem to have been actually published before October. Baldwin's copy of it reached Wilmington (*i. e.*, Wilmington, *Del.*) November 12 (Reliq. Baldw. 248).

Of No. 5 I have a copy in the original cover and can verify Gray's statement that it bears the date 1817. It probably appeared in December of that year. Baldwin sailed from Hampton Roads for South America on December 3 (Reliq. Baldw. 251, 253), and it is quite certain that he had not seen No. 5 at that time. His letters make no reference to that number, as far as I can discover, and I have no further data to offer.

After the appearance of Number 5, a considerable break occurs in the publication of Elliott's Sketch. As I am not aware that any explanation of this break has ever been given in print, the

following extract from a letter of Stephen Elliott to John Torrey, dated at Charleston, November 21, 1818, may be of interest in this connection :

“Early in January last I was attacked by a Rheumatic affection of the Head so severe that for months I was incapable of attending to anything. I could not even sign my name without suffering. With the return of summer my indisposition abated. But excepting a fortnight in July when I prepared for the press the sixth number of my sketch, my letters to you in January were the last literary exertions I have made. In the commencement of August when I was expecting and preparing to resume my usual habits, circumstances occurred which determined me to visit our Western Country and I have just returned from an excursion over a part of the Alabama Territory. I made this expedition so unexpectedly to myself that I had only time to arrange such business as was absolutely necessary and I have returned merely to visit my Family and business for a moment. In two days I expect to leave this for Columbia to attend the Sessions of our Legislature, and from thence it is uncertain whether I may not return immediately to the Alabama. I have not had time since my return to visit my herbarium and Books which are on a small farm I own about two miles from the City.” And again, in a letter without date, but postmarked at Charleston “Aug. 19” and bearing an endorsement by Torrey showing that it was received August 30, 1819: “At present I have not my Herbarium nor my Books in Charleston with me. They are at a small farm in the country.” These two letters are the only ones from Elliott now to be found among Torrey’s correspondence. The others, if they could be found, might throw additional light upon the dates of the Sketch.

The sixth part, concluding the first volume, was not published until 1821. Meanwhile Baldwin had died, September 1, 1819, at Franklin, Missouri Territory, so his correspondence is no longer available for data. Gray says, “before October 12,” and I can add nothing to this, although I would not be surprised to learn that it occurred early in the year.

To sum up all the evidence brought out in the preceding discussion, we may say :

No. 1. Pp. 1-96, pl. 1-2, originally issued September 26, 1816; recalled, reprinted and reissued with No. 2. This number (at least when reissued) contained an "Advertisement" of two pages (pp. i-ii) and a Glossary of 14 pages, both usually missing from bound copies of the work.

No. 2. Pp. 97-200, almost unquestionably appeared in December, 1816.

No. 3. Pp. 201-296, March, 1817.

No. 4. Pp. 297-400, October, 1817. Plates 3 and 4, which illustrate species described in No. 1, seem to have been distributed with No. 4—also supplementary pages iii-vi, containing the "advertisement," nearly all of which is quoted above after Gray's notes, and descriptions of several species of *Panicum* and *Agrostis*. These supplementary pages are usually found at the end of Volume I. of bound copies of this work, but appeared with No. 4.

No. 5. Pp. 401-496, 1817, probably December.

No. 6. Pp. 497-606, 1821, probably early in the year.

All that has been said thus far relates to the dates of the first volume. Until recently I was under the impression that the second volume was not issued in parts, but appeared as a whole in 1824. It is true that Gray says, "No. 6, the commencement of the second volume, appeared on or before October 12, 1821," but we have seen that No. 6 was *not* the commencement of the second volume. However, a few months ago I secured copies of the first and second numbers of Volume II. in their original covers.

No. 1. Pp. 1-104, is dated 1821.

No. 2. Pp. 105-208 is dated 1822.

This time, it will be noticed, the numbers did not consist of twelve and thirteen signatures alternately, but of thirteen signatures, or 104 pages, each. From a careful inspection of several bound copies of this volume it seems likely that this size was continued through the remaining parts. Plates 7-12, although almost entirely devoted to plants described in the first volume, were not issued with any of the parts of that volume, nor with parts 1 and 2 of the second volume. When plates 5 and 6 were published I cannot say.

On the back cover of Vol. II., No. 1, is the statement: "This work will be comprised in twelve numbers, to be published monthly

until the work is completed." It is plain that this promise was not kept, but in view of this announcement it is not likely that many months elapsed between the appearance of Nos. 1 and 2. As one is dated 1821 and the other 1822, it is altogether probable that No. 1 was published late in 1821, and No. 2 early in the following year. Of the remaining numbers I have no data at hand, but I think we shall not be far out of the way if we assign 1822 to No. 3, 1823 to Nos. 4 and 5, and 1824, the title-page date, to No. 6. Perhaps some one who reads these lines may possess original copies of these numbers, and can furnish their pagination and dates. It happens that the exact dates of these numbers are not quite so important as those of the others, for during these years 1822-1824 there was a remarkable hiatus in the publication of works relating to American botany, and I know of no question of priority involving the dates of these parts.

We may sum up Volume 2 as follows :

No. 1. Pp. 1-104, 1821, probably late in the year.

No. 2. Pp. 105-208, 1822, probably early in the year.

No. 3. Pp. 209-312, 1822 ?.

No. 4. Pp. 313-416, 1823 ?.

No. 5. Pp. 417-520, 1823 ?.

No. 6. Pp. 521-743, pl. 7-12 ?, 1824.